

LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP: CONFLICT BETWEEN BABY BOOM  
MANAGERS  
AND GENERATION X FIREFIGHTERS

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

A conflict of leadership styles in the fire service was discovered to be related directly to an ideological disparity between "Baby Boom" managers and "Generation X" firefighters.

The problem resulted from the "traditional" leadership style of Baby Boom managers who perceived Generation X firefighters as "slackers, whiners, underachievers, lazy complainers who: Don't want to pay their dues. [and] Have a 'this world owes me' mentality." (Benson, 1998, p. 18)

The purpose of this research paper was to compare and contrast traditional leadership styles generally used by the Baby Boom generation with current, more modern, styles which were thought to be more compatible with Generation X employee ideology.

The research method used was the historical method. Questions to be answered by this research were:

1. What leadership and/or motivational styles have traditionally been used in the fire service?
2. What modern leadership and/or motivational styles are available to the fire service?
3. How can Baby Boom fire department managers satisfy the needs of Generation X firefighters and those of the organization?

The research procedures used included the use of the

Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy, local libraries, personal library, and the World Wide Web on-line services.

The results of this research showed a need for fire service leaders to update their management style.

The recommendation of this research is for fire service leaders to listen to Generation X firefighters. "Xers" want freedom/autonomy, active involvement, recognition, empathy/understanding, and direct communication/feedback from the organization leadership. (Benson, 1998, p. 20)

Fire Service leaders must change their leadership style or risk losing the support of Generation X firefighters. The Xer generation has the power to continue the tradition of fire department excellence or destroy it with a "slacker" mentality acted out in public and on the job. Fire service leaders should accept this challenge as they have all the others. It is an opportunity to increase personal and organizational effectiveness.

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## Introduction

The problem with the fire service today is that the management methods and leadership styles used by department administrators are outmoded in light of the expectations, work ethics, motivational, and job satisfaction needs of line firefighters generally under forty years of age. The "Generation X" employee, now ages 17 to 36 (Benson, 1998, p. 16) exhibits attitudes and work ethics that appear unacceptable to the "Baby Boom Generation" manager or administrator, now ages 34 to 52. (Luntz, 1998, p. 1)

There is research that indicates traditional management styles are considered ineffective. Firefighters, whether "Xers" or "Boomers" face the unique situation of living and working together. Leadership and management issues regarding perceived work ethic and job satisfaction differences between these two generations provides a potentially explosive mixture for the fire service.

The purpose of this research project is to compare and contrast traditional leadership styles generally used by the Baby Boom Generation with current styles which may be more compatible with Generation X firefighters. This project uses the historical research method. Questions to be answered in this research are:

1. What leadership and/or motivational styles have traditionally been used in the fire service?
2. What modern leadership and/or motivational styles are available to the fire service?
3. How can Baby Boomer fire department managers satisfy the needs of Generation X firefighters and those of the organization?

### **Background and Significance**

Results of "The Leadership Profile Observer's Assessment," a required project of the Executive Development class in which the author participated in January, 1998 at the National Fire Academy, produced findings so low they did not register on the charts in most instances. This response has been, at least in part, attributed to the general low morale of the Keller Fire Department because of dissatisfaction with their compensation plan (See Appendix A) and fear of having the local fire department-based ambulance service privatized. (King, 1997)

Unit 5, "Following and Leading," (Student Manual, 1998, p. SM 5-2) "Terminal Objective" number three states, "Given an

understanding of followership and leadership, the students will consistently provide effective transformational leadership to design and build a positive culture in their organizations."

The City of Keller, Texas fire department has 30 paid firefighters. In the past three years; however, there has been the highest turnover rate (approximately 30%) in twelve year history with paid employees. Although nine new positions have been created and filled in the past three years, ten firefighters have separated from the department...all were between 23 and 34 years of age...all Generation X employees.

This research was undertaken to discover possible ways to strengthen relationships between leaders and followers of different generations. It is hoped this information could be useful not only in the Keller Fire Department, but in all fire departments facing generational differences.

## Literature Review

In nearly 80 years of research into employees and job satisfaction there has been a tremendous amount of research relating to the motivation, satisfaction, and performance of employees. Feldman and Arnold (1983, pp. 192-193) cite the work of E. A. Locke (1976) who wrote, "...there have been well over 3,000 studies that have tried to discover what specific aspects of the job situation are the most important sources of job satisfaction." The authors listed Locke's three main findings: "Industrial engineering" studies of the 1920s by Frederick Taylor; "Human relations movement" research of the 1930s and 40s by E. Mayo (1933) and F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson (1939); and "Work itself (or growth) school" research published by F. Herzberg (1959).

Research into the definition of leadership seemed to be appropriate to this study. The following statement; however, tended to obfuscate rather than elucidate on the topic. It did indicate a tremendous interest in the subject from the standpoint of the research community. Feldman and Arnold (1983) attempted to define "leadership,"

There is no clear consensus regarding exactly what leadership is and how the term should be defined. This lack of consensus is not, however, a result of a lack of effort.



There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are researchers who have studied the topic and over 3,000 empirical studies of leadership have been carried out. (p. 288)

Further review revealed three behavioral theories of leadership conducted at separate Midwestern universities: the University of Iowa study by Lippitt, Lippitt, and White in 1939; the Ohio State University study by Fleishman and Harris in 1962; and the University of Michigan study by Katz, Maccoby and Morse in 1950. (Feldman and Arnold, pp. 296-301)

The Iowa theorists focused on the decision-making component of the leader's behavior and classified leaders into three different types according to their style of handling decision-making situations.

**Authoritarian.** The leader makes decisions alone and tells subordinates what to do in light of the decisions made by the leader.

**Democratic.** The leader actively involves subordinates in the decision-making process, sharing problems with them, soliciting their inputs, and sharing the authority for arriving at decisions.

**Laissez-Faire.** The leader avoids making a decision whenever possible and leaves it up to subordinates

to make individual decisions on their own with little guidance or direction either from the leader or from the rest of the group. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 297)

The Democratic leadership style seems to be the most desirable in terms of effectiveness and individuals working under democratic leaders were more satisfied, had higher morale, were more creative, and had better working relationships with their superiors. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 297)

The Ohio State studies identified two leadership styles which have relatively broad categories of leader behavior.

**Consideration.** As its name suggests, consideration refers to the extent to which a leader is considerate of subordinates and concerned about the quality of his or her relationship with subordinates. Among the specific examples of leader behavior included the dimensions of friendliness, consultation with subordinates, recognition of subordinates open communication with subordinates, supportiveness, and representation of subordinate interests.

**Initiating structure.** Initiating structure refers

to the extent to which a leader in task-oriented is concerned with utilizing resources and personnel effectively in order to accomplish group goals. Specific types of leader behavior included in the initiating structure dimension include planning, coordinating, directing, problem solving, clarifying subordinate roles, criticizing poor work, and pressuring subordinates to perform more effectively. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 298-299)

The results of this study indicated that high levels of leader consideration were associated with lower levels of employee grievances and turnover. Neither consideration nor initiating structure has been found to be consistently related to any other measures of subordinate performance. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 299)

The approach adopted by Michigan researchers Katz, Maccoby and Morse (1950) was first to identify leaders who were acknowledged to be either effective or ineffective and then to study the behavior of these leaders in a search for patterns of behavior that might differentiate the effective and ineffective leaders. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 299)

**Employee-oriented.** As its name implies, employee-oriented leader behavior is highly similar to leader

behavior which is high on consideration. The employee-oriented leader is concerned with welfare and development of subordinates, engages in two-way communication with subordinates, is supportive and nonpunitive [sic], and delegates responsibility and authority to subordinates.

**Production-oriented.** The notion of a leader who is highly production-oriented is very similar to the idea of a leader who is high on initiating structure. Production-oriented leaders emphasize planning, goal-setting, and meeting schedules. They are more likely to give subordinates explicit instructions, make use of power, evaluate subordinates, and generally stress the importance of production. (Feldman and Arnold, p. 300)

Colburn (1975, pp. 66-67) observed, "The chain of command flows downward from the head through the subordinate chiefs to the individual company commanders to the firefighters. Authority and responsibility are delegated to subordinates who are given definite spans of control and supervision, but final responsibility rests with the department head...[the] chain-of command theory is utilized in most fire departments." He compared the fire service organization with business and the

military (Colburn, p. 69) in Table 1:

<b>Table 1. Comparative Line Organizations</b>		
<b>ARMY</b>	<b>FIRE DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>BUSINESS</b>
Major General	Chief	President
Brig. General	Deputy Chief	Vice President
Colonel	Asst. Deputy Chief	Asst. Vice Pres.
Lt. Colonel	Platoon Commander	Divisional Manager
Major	District Chief	Plant Manager
Captain	Battalion Chief	Department Manager
First Lt.	Co. Officer-Capt.	Section Manager
Second Lt.	Co. Officer-Lt.	Supervisors
Soldiers	Firefighters	Workers

Chief George Teague, Lewisville, Texas Fire Chief in 1981, (personal communication, October 21, 1981) lectured a Tarrant County Junior College [Fort Worth, Texas] Fire Protection Technology class in "Fire Administration" with the following statement, "A good [fire department] organization exists from coordination and rules. It is a pyramidal, hierarchical, scalar or line-type organization. The communication flow is from the top down." For many years the chief set the policies and the troops carried them out, payday was Friday and "if you didn't like it you could leave."

Bollman (1991) discussed the frames of reference for organizations. He noted that from a structural perspective, organizations are guided by goals and policies set at the top. He also cited the "human resource frame of reference" as one from which malfunctions result from the mismatch between the needs of organizations and the needs of individuals or from

strategies used to manage interpersonal or group dynamics. And in defining the "political frame of reference," Bollman described organizations as "alive and screaming" political arenas that house a complex variety of individual and group interests. (Bollman, p. 186)

James L. Kolb and Raymond C. Picard (1979) emphasized the elements of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling management "Managing Fire Control" in the textbook the author, a Baby Boomer, used in his formal fire service education. "Only a clear understanding of the management function, coupled with administrative ability backed up with proven technical background, will lead to the attainment of fire department and community goals and the accomplishment of objectives. (Kolb and Picard, p. 214)

Benson (1998, p. 16-18) observed, "Managers generally see [Generation] Xers as slackers, whiners, underachievers, lazy complainers who: "Don't want to pay their dues. Have a "this world owes me" mentality. Their advice to Generation X is: Get a real work ethic or get out of my face." Benson (p. 18) also noted that the number of Generation X employees is "close to 80 million in America alone, which parallels the size of the Baby Boom Generation." As today's fire service leaders we are only beginning to face this new generation. As older

fire fighters retire and are replaced with more Generation Xers, the leaders being developed today must have a deeper understanding of leadership and followership as defined by this new generation.

"Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right." (Bennis, 1989, p. 18) In his five year study of ninety of the most effective, successful leaders in the United States, sixty from corporations and thirty from the public sector, Bennis sought to find traits that were common to leaders. He found that American organizations were largely underled [sic] and overmanaged [sic].

They do not pay enough attention to doing the right thing, while they pay too much attention to doing things right. Part of the fault lies with our schools of management; we teach people to be good technicians and good staff people, but we don't train people for leadership. (Bennis, pp. 18-19)

Bennis defined four competencies evident to some extent in every member of the group: management of attention; management of meaning; management of trust and management of self. (Bennis, p. 20)

On management of attention, the first trait, Bennis said

these leaders have the ability to draw others to themselves not just because they have vision, but because they communicate an extraordinary focus of commitment. "Leaders manage attention through a compelling vision that brings others to a place they have not been before." (Bennis, p. 19)

One of the leaders Bennis interviewed was Leon Fleischer, a prominent musical conductor and musicologist. When interviewing two of Fleischer's musicians, one said, "I'll tell you why he's so great. He doesn't waste our time." (Bennis, p. 20) He further observed,

Every moment Fleischer stood in front of his orchestra, he knew exactly what sound he wanted. He didn't waste time because his intentions were always evident. What united him with the other musicians was their concern with intention and outcome.

(Bennis, p.20)

Management of meaning is the second leadership competency which Bennis listed. He said, "To make dreams apparent to others and to align people with them, leaders must communicate their vision. Communication and alignment work together." (Bennis, p. 20) He compared the communication styles of Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. "Ronald Reagan is



called 'the Great Communicator'; one of his speech writers said that Reagan can read the phone book and make it interesting. The reason is that Reagan uses metaphors with which people can identify." (Bennis, p. 20) "In contrast, President Carter was boring. Carter was one of our best-informed presidents...But he never made the meaning come through the facts." (Bennis, pp. 20-21) He interviewed an assistant secretary of commerce who said, "...that after four years in Carter's administration, she still did not know what he stood for. She said that working for him was like looking through the wrong side of a tapestry; the scene was blurry and indistinct." (Bennis, p. 21) He sums up this competency with the statement, "The leader's goal is not mere explanation or clarification but the creation of meaning." (Bennis, p. 21)

The third competency is management of trust. Trust is essential to all organizations. The main determinant of trust is reliability, what I call constancy. When I talked to the board members of staff of these leaders, I heard certain phrases again and again: 'She is all of a piece.' 'Whether you like it or not, you always know where he is coming from, what he stands for.' (Bennis, p. 21)

Bennis continued discussing competencies of leaders:

A recent study showed that people would rather follow individuals they can count on, even when they disagree with their viewpoint, than people they agree with but who shift positions frequently. I cannot emphasize enough the significance of constancy and focus. (Bennis, p. 21)

The fourth leadership competency Bennis identified was management of self. That was described as basically knowing one's skills and using them effectively. "Management of self is critical; without it, leaders and managers can do more harm than good. Like incompetent doctors, incompetent managers can make life worse, make people sicker and less vital." ( Bennis, p. 21)

Coleman (1989, p. 26) speaking about fire department operations said, "But not all the crises occur on the fireground. It is axiomatic that in most organizations, fires and emergencies constitute about 10 percent of our time, and the remainder is spent dealing with crises in the firehouse, or in local government activities."

"Most managers are leaders **and** followers; but because of the emphasis and preoccupation with leadership, the follower role which dominates our professional lives, but not our

thinking, is often ignored." (Student Manual, p. SM 5-4)

Generation X employees make up eighty per cent of all entry-level new hires in virtually every industry. (Benson, 1998, p. 16) Generation X employees are defined by Benson as having birth dates between 1961 and 1981. She further describes Generation Xers:

- They are the product of latch-key parenting and unprecedented divorce rates.
- Have inherited a stagnant job market, corporate down-sizing and limited wage mobility.
- Are the first generation predicted to earn less than their parents did.
- Feel abandoned, cheated, and left to fend for themselves.
- Are collectively saying "no" to traditional management approaches in the workplace. (Benson, p. 16)

Generation Xers have a Web page (LAZINESS.COM, 1998) with a fictional super hero named "Slackman" who embodies the Xer mentality. "We idolize things we should ignore and ignore things we should respect." (Slansing@AOL.com, 1998, CONTENT/LAZINESS.COM, p. 1)

Arie De Geus, head of planning, Royal Dutch/Shell said,

"The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage." (Senge, 1990, p.4)

"What fundamentally will distinguish learning organizations from traditional authoritarian 'controlling organizations' will be the mastery of certain basic disciplines." (Senge, p.5) Engineers say that a new idea has been 'invented' when it is proven to work in the laboratory. The idea becomes an 'innovation' when it can be replicated reliably on a meaningful scale at practical costs. If the idea is sufficiently important, such as the telephone, the digital computer, or commercial aircraft, it is called a 'basic innovation', and it creates a new industry or transforms an existing industry. (Senge, p. 6)

O'Brien of Hanover Insurance was quoted by Senge (1990) as having said,

People enter business as bright, well-educated, high-energy people, full of energy and desire to make a difference. By the time they are 30, a few are on the 'fast track' and the rest 'put in their time' to do what matters to them on the weekend. They lose their commitment, the sense of mission,

and the excitement with which they started their careers. We get damn little of their energy and almost none of their spirit. (Senge, p. 7)

Senge defined the start of 'team learning' as, The discipline of team learning starts with 'dialogue,' the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine 'thinking together.' To the Greeks *dialogos* meant a free-flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually." (Senge, p. 10)

Senge defined discipline for leaders in the following statement,

Discipline is a developmental path for acquiring certain skills or competencies. As with any discipline, from playing the piano to electrical engineering, some people have an innate 'gift,' but anyone can develop proficiency through practice. To practice a discipline is to be a lifelong learner. You 'never arrive'; you spend your life mastering disciplines. (Senge, p. 11)

Modern leadership research had the obvious benefit of the historical perspective on which it was built. The following

research appeared to be as motivational as it was practical,

As we looked deeper in to this dynamic process...we uncovered five fundamental practices that enabled these leaders to get extraordinary things done.

When they were at their personal best, our leaders:

1. Challenged the process.
2. Inspired a shared vision.
3. Enabled others to act.
4. Modeled the way.
5. Encouraged the heart

These practices are not the private property of the leaders we studied. They are available to anyone who wants to accept the leadership challenge.

(Kouzes and Pozner, 1987, pp. 8-9)

The problems with today's changing leadership styles is summed up as follows (Bennis and Townsend, 1995, p. ix),

Making the transition from the old style of leadership to the new one is a challenge for top management at every organization. The militaristic, command-and-control leadership of the past has become an anachronism. In the post-downsizing, flat-management era today, a new leadership style is necessary. The time has come to ask yourself: Have you and your company adapted

to this new set of standards or are you hanging on to the anachronistic rules of the past?

Farace, Monge, and Russel (1977, p. 149) commented on manager, supervisor, and worker perceptions of their communication and how it affects their working relationships, ...these data suggest that managers are more likely than supervisors or workers to think that downward communication is taking place...workers are more inclined to believe they are participating in upward communication than are either of their two immediate supervisory levels...[there] is a constant pattern of misperception [sic] on the part of workers, supervisors, and managers about the state of their relationships.

### **Procedures**

While on campus at the National Fire Academy, January 5-16, 1998, the author used the Learning Resource Center (LRC) to obtain information through the computer catalog system to locate references in books, periodicals, and Executive Fire Officer research papers. Upon returning home, the author used information in the Keller Fire Department files and the City

of Keller Library on-line computer system to search the North Texas Inter-Library System. None of the resources were available locally and were ordered from regional libraries. The author also purchased some excellent used textbooks in a library sale, referenced his personal library of management resource books, and used the World Wide Web for on-line searches.

The research results describe highlights about leadership traits both past and present. There is a vast array of information about leadership and management methods available to the researcher. Authors often reference each other's work and seem to support the body of knowledge with which they happen to agree.

The problem statement, purpose statement, and questions established for this research paper were used as topical criteria in the research process. Information obtained was sorted by date, topic, and its relevance to the criteria established for the research. An attempt was made by the author to limit the research to more current literature in an effort to provide relevant information to others in the fire service leadership field who might benefit from these more recent findings in their own department.



## **Results**

The information obtained from the research for this paper contained sufficient data to answer the established research questions set forth in the introduction section as follows:

1. What leadership and/or motivational styles have traditionally been used in the fire service?

The research indicates that traditional leadership methods employed by the fire service are basically 'militaristic,' 'command-and-control' types of leadership styles. Traditional leadership styles researched included studies conducted at the following three universities: Iowa State University, Ohio State University, and the University of Michigan.

The Iowa Studies identified three main types of leadership styles: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire.

The Ohio State Studies identified two leadership styles: Consideration and Initiating Structure leadership styles.

The Michigan Studies identified two types of leadership styles: Employee-Oriented and Production-Oriented styles.

2. What modern leadership and/or motivational styles are available to the fire service?

The results of this research revealed a large body of information relating to "modern" approaches to leadership from both private business and the public sector. There has been a movement away from the traditional style of one-way communication in the hierarchical leadership styles to a two-way participative style. Employee satisfaction, especially among Generation X, appears to be increasingly tied to being made to feel they have autonomy, active involvement, personal recognition, empathy/understanding, and direct communication with managers. (Benson, pp. 20-27)

3. How can Baby Boomer fire department managers improve relationships with and satisfy the needs of Generation X firefighters and those of the organization?

A variety of relationships were identified between leaders and followers. It should be obvious that leaders need followers in order to reach organizational goals. The relationships involved between leaders and followers in any particular organization are changing toward the expectations of Generation X according to the most recent literature reviewed.

Continuous learning by an organization is a developing idea in which individuals perceive themselves and their world

as being interconnected. There is a "metanoia" or shift of mind in which the employee is encouraged to share the vision the leader communicates to the entire organization and participate in creating their own reality. (Senge, p. 13)

### **Discussion**

The firefighting profession has traditionally been regarded as a secure job, maybe not a high-paying job, but one with stability. "Corporate mergers, re-engineering, and massive layoffs have had a financial and psychological impact on Xers, resulting in a general mistrust of employers and the notion of job security itself." (Benson, p. 18) She continued, "In spite of 'total quality,' 'empowerment,' etc., Generation X believes that there is too much lip service and too many hollow promises when it comes to 'walking the talk'." (p. 18)

The results of this research found that the study of leadership styles appears to be in a constant state of flux that is in sync with the trends of each generation. Influence from a preceding generation that may have been authoritarian appears to breed an opposite reaction, in essence, a "thumbing of the nose" at the authority forced upon it, one that is

proud to be called a "slacker."

The interdependence of the research supported the view stated below,

While it is no doubt true that leaders can and do influence their followers, it is also true that leaders and followers engage in interaction with one another, which necessarily implies that existence of mutual influence. In other words, not only is it true that leaders influence followers, but it is equally true that followers influence leaders.

(Feldman and Arnold, p. 289)

Much of the effort involved in studying leadership focused on leaders themselves and how their behaviors caused followers to react. An important contribution of recent research on leadership has been to point out the shortsightedness and inadequacy of this view of leader-follower relations.

It is believed by the author that a visionary leadership style which seeks long-range goals and the input of all members of an organization is doing so with the best interests of individuals and the organization.

The implications of public perception of the fire service as a rather traditional organization are not great at

first glance. As symbols of vigilance, the hard-working, community-minded, salt-of-the-earth fire fighters stand ready to race off at a moment's notice to risk their lives so that others might live. This snapshot endures in the mythology surrounding the fire service, to its credit, and continues to remain the 'good guys and gals.'

However, the public rarely sees the issues facing the modern fire chief and his or her officers that may eventually affect the delivery of emergency services to their own doorstep. Issues relating to hiring a motivated work force that is capable of withstanding the physical, emotional, and mental challenges in a fire service career.

On the fireground, the traditional, action-oriented leader stands up and says, 'Follow me!' as he leads a crew into a burning building. But back in the fire station the same traditional leader sits back and says, 'handle it,' as he stares into his computer screen trying to finish the monthly report and his crew wonders exactly what he meant. This dichotomy of leadership styles used in the fire service is not unique to our profession. It can breed frustration with administrators because of employees' perceived lack of sensitivity to the needs of management and organizational goals. The individual fire fighter is not always seen as a

valuable member of the team when not engaged in emergency work. His or her many talents and abilities may lay hidden for years unless leadership and followership improve their communication skills and empathize with each other.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that meaningful relationships be fostered by meeting the needs of the individual and the organization in a balanced way through better two-way communications between administrators, supervisors, and workers. Adoption of the "continuous organizational learning" concept will also allow the evolutionary changes time to take place. That will help ensure longevity of the organizational culture and other important traditions to the fire service delivery system.

It is believed that issues relating to Generation Xers who say they can't trust anyone, especially employers, will improve in direct proportion to the extra effort put forth by Baby Boom administrations. The generational conflict, whose disparate value systems created the friction in the first place, should improve with better communications training and active involvement by both sides in improving the

organization.

It is the finding of this research that the relationship the traditional manager has with the typical employee is shallow and mostly related to business. There has been little or no attempt to improve this relationship and find out the needs of the individual relative to the needs of the organization. There has been no desire to communicate the "grand vision" of the upper leadership to the individual employee, perhaps because, as leaders, we have failed to stress the importance of every member knowing and understanding their place in the mission and where their career plans will fit into the organization in the future. We, as leaders, have not effectively communicated a future oriented mission statement to our followers or, for the most part, done anything more than pay lip service to their input.

The potential impact of Generation X employees and their accompanying set of attitudes and values on the fire service is enormous. They will ultimately be the sole benefactors. And, as the public demands more and more personal services from fire departments, the employees must know not only how to be good technicians, but also how to share the burden for carrying out the organizational goals...perhaps in areas that are totally new to them.

If today's firefighters "throw a pebble into the pond of fire department services" by becoming "slackers," the ripples they make will negatively affect all other fire services and eventually the attitudes of the public. Better communication between generations will help ensure a continuous flow of departmental services which are sensitive to the needs of the public, the employee, and the organization.

### **Recommendations**

Accepting the challenge of leading Generation X fire fighters who do not trust traditional leadership and management styles is not an option for the fire service leader today. Leaders must have followers or there is no one to carry out organizational duties or to reach organizational goals.

Leadership is an interpersonal process/relationship.

What are traits/characteristics that are critical for a leader today? Integrity, self-discipline, intelligence, persuader, communicator, confident.

If I can acquire and learn to use the traits then I can become a leader. (Charles J. Burkell, personal communication, January 8, 1998)



Fire service leaders must acquire these valued leadership traits for themselves and find ways to communicate them, the values, and vision they have to their followers. In so doing they will begin to build interpersonal relationships, meeting needs of individuals as well as the group and reaching the organizational goals of their department.

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LAZINESS.COM, THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE WAY TO WASTE TIME.

**APPENDIX A:****Wage and Salary Comparisons by Job**

# Ray Associates, Inc. Salary Survey

## Firefighter/EMT

Average Overall Salary:	\$34,197	Keller % of Average:	85.0%
Median Minimum Salary:	\$29,888	Keller % of Median:	85.8%
<i>(Both Exclude Keller)</i>			

